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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001238

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/2015

TAGS:

SUBJECT: NEPAL POLICE ARREST MAOIST VICTIM PROTESTORS

REF(S): A) KATHMANDU 01121 B) KATHMANDU 01194

Classified By: Charge Elisabeth Millard. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

1. (U) Summary. Fifty-three Maoist Victim Association protestors were arrested by police on the grounds that they had no permission to be in a restricted area in Kathmandu on June 5. However, Nepali political parties held a mock parliament event on June 3 in which 19 National Assembly members and 132 lawmakers from the House of Representatives participated in Kathmandu on June 3 without police interference. End Summary.

Third Arrest of Maoist Victims Association Protestors

2. (SBU) Approximately 200 people gathered in an area of Kathmandu banned for protests on Sunday, June 5 in a peaceful sit down demonstration to ask the government to provide Maoist victims food, shelter and information on the status of internal refugees. Police arrested 12 of the protestors, including the acting president of the Maoist Victims Association, Dharma Raj Neupane, for protesting in a prohibited area. (Note: Police had also arrested and released Neupane on the same grounds on May 13 and May 26. End note.) According to the spokesman of the Maoist Victims Association, police later returned and forcibly confiscated tents and other shelter materials and arrested about 40 additional protestors, including children and elderly individuals. Those arrested were taken to Kharipati, Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley, where they remained in custody as of June 7.

3. (SBU) The Maoist Victims Association used the death of a Maoist victim, Gana Bahadur Gharti, 32, who died June 1, as a catalyst to protest on June 5. Gharti might have died as a result of injuries sustained on May 29 by government security forces in a Kathmandu protest (as claimed by the Maoist Victims Association) or from a heart attack (as claimed by the Birendra Police Hospital after an autopsy.)

4. (C) The Home Ministry spokesman, Gopendra Bahadur Pandey, told PolOff that the local administrator took action against the protestors in order to prevent objectionable activities.⁸ He said that there were currently 53 people in custody in Kharipati. That number did not include 4 or 5 children who were with their parents in custody. The children themselves were not in custody, but accompanying their parent, whose choice was to keep the children with them. Pandey said that the Home Ministry was working to provide additional relief to internally displaced people.

5. (SBU) Political parties and human rights groups have reacted strongly to the arrests. CPN-UML Party Office Secretary Kashinath Adhikari condemned the government for

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using force on people who were internally displaced from their homes due to Maoist actions. The National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders, formerly known as the group of 25 human rights organizations, condemned the ongoing repressive actions of the state against internally displaced persons.

Mock Parliament Event Peaceful

6. (U) The mock session of the parliament organized by the political parties in a street in Patan in the Kathmandu Valley on June 3 passed peacefully with no interference from the police. Altogether, 19 former National Assembly members and 132 former lawmakers from the House of Representatives participated in the mock parliamentary session. They represented 95 percent of the political parties which had ever held a seat in parliament. Chaired by Deputy Speaker of the dissolved House of Representatives Chitra Lekha Yadav, the session, as expected (Ref B,) endorsed the common agenda of the seven political parties and passed a 13-point resolution unanimously declaring that the reinstatement of the parliament, and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990, would be the starting point to resolve the current problems faced by the country. The mock parliament's 13th point was to heartily thank all the friendly countries for supporting their joint movement against King's dictatorship.⁸

Comment

17. (C) Although the arrest of Maoist victims is unrelated to prospects for reconciliation among Nepal,s political forces, it is nevertheless troubling. The government,s action is front page news in Nepal, with the June 6 edition of the English language &The Himalayan8 newspaper carrying a photograph of plainclothes police personnel arresting a mother and child from the Maoist Victims Association rally.

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